DATELINE NO. 63 MILWAUKEE, WISC. MARCH 10, 1976
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FINDING AND NURTURING -- GIFTED CHILDREN
(INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: AND NOW, THE VOICE OF AMERICA PRESENTS DATELINE -- ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES ... TODAY'S DATELINE IS MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN ... THE SUBJECT IS GIFTED CHILDREN ... AND YOUR REPORTER IS _____.

NARR: GIFTED CHILDREN: THEY ARE TALENTED, INQUISITIVE, MATURE ... AND A PROBLEM. NOT A PROBLEM IN THE SENSE OF THE UNRULY, INDOMITABLE CHILD, BUT A PROBLEM, NEVERTHELESS, TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS WHO ARE OFTEN AT A LOSS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM. HOW DO YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, DEAL WITH A CHILD WHO AT AGE 4 OR 5 CAN SOLVE MATHEMATICAL QUESTIONS EASIER THAN AN ADULT? OR THE CHILD WHO HAS NEVER HAD A LESSON IN MUSIC AND SITS AT A PIANO AND PLAYS BETTER THAN HIS ELDERS? THIS HAS BEEN AN ALMOST AGONIZING PROBLEM FOR MANY EDUCATORS IN THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD, AS WELL AS PARENTS. INDEED, DO YOU ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE A GIFTED CHILD IN THE SAME MANNER AS YOU WOULD ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE AN AVERAGE CHILD?

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BUT, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, WHAT EXACTLY IS A GIFTED CHILD? ACCORDING TO JEAN NOLTE, AN EDUCATOR FROM MILWAUKEE, IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- NOLTE

"GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN, AS DEFINED BY THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION, INCLUDE CHILDREN WHO MIGHT ALREADY HAVE DEMONSTRATED ABILITY OR WHO HAVE POTENTIAL ABILITY IN ONE OR MORE OF SIX AREAS, AND THOSE ARE THE AREAS OF GENERAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITY. THAT'S THE CHILD WITH THE HIGH IQ. SPECIFIC ACADEMIC APTITUDE -- THE CHILD WHO READS PARTICULARLY WELL, IS VERY GOOD IN MATH OR SCIENCE. THE CREATIVE OR PRODUCTIVE-THINKING CHILD -- THE CHILD WHO'S ABLE TO COME UP WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF IDEAS OR SOLUTIONS. THE CHILD WHO'S GIFTED IN LEADERSHIP, VISUAL OR PERFORMING ARTS, OR IN WHAT THEY CALL THE PSYCHOMOTOR AREA -- AND THAT INCLUDES THE ATHLETES, AUTO MECHANICS, PEOPLE LIKE THAT."

NARR: A GIFT OR TALENT IS DETERMINED BY TEST SCORES AND EVALUATIONS BY QUALIFIED EDUCATORS OR PROFESSIONALS -- AND VERY OFTEN, THE MOTHERS OF SUCH CHILDREN ARE UNSURE WHY THEIR CHILDREN HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS GIFTED. FOR PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN ARE NOT NECESSARILY GIFTED THEMSELVES. THEY MAY EVEN BE EDUCATIONALLY OR ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED. ANOTHER FACT: GIFTED CHILDREN CAN BE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. BUT THEY ALL HAVE SOMETHING OR SOME THINGS IN COMMON: THEY ARE INQUISITIVE. THEY ARE AVID READERS AND STARTED READING WHEN VERY YOUNG. THEY ARE MATURE FOR THEIR AGE. AND BY THE TIME THEY REACH HIGH SCHOOL, THEIR BRIGHTNESS CREATES PROBLEMS SOCIALLY.

AGAIN, THEN, THE QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THESE GIFTED CHILDREN?

FOR THE PAST 18 MONTHS AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED HAS ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER. MRS. NOLTE -- HERSELF THE

NARR:
(CONT'D) MOTHER OF TWO GIFTED CHILDREN -- IS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL. IN HER OWN WORDS, THE COUNCIL IS "AN ORGANIZATION OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS, WHOSE MAJOR GOAL IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMS IN EACH LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN) FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN."

TAPE: CUT TWO -- NOLTE

"IN MOST OF THE AREAS WHERE WE HAVE LOCAL GROUPS, PARENTS HAVE WORKED WITH THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, THE PRINCIPALS AND SOME CLASSROOM TEACHERS ON TASK FORCES, FOR INSTANCE, OR CURRICULUM COMMITTEES, OR THE LOCAL GROUPS WILL SPONSOR IN-SERVICE FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND BRING CONSULTANTS TO HELP THE TEACHERS DO SOME KIND OF PROGRAM PLANNING.

"WE'VE ALSO HELD TWO STATEWIDE CONFERENCES WITH MANY CONSULTANTS, INCLUDING SOME NATIONALLY-KNOWN PEOPLE, AND HAD AUDIENCES UP TO THREE HUNDRED AT OUR LAST CONFERENCE IN STEVENS POINT. ONE OF OUR LOCAL DISTRICTS SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIPS TO SEND TEACHERS TO THAT CONFERENCE, ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF POSSIBILITIES. SOME GROUPS ARE SPONSORING SATURDAY CLASSES FOR KIDS THEMSELVES, SO THERE ARE MANY, MANY WAYS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE CHILDREN."

NARR: ACCORDING TO STATISTICS, THERE ARE THREE MILLION SUCH GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES -- INCLUDING 130,000 IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN. THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE--THE LARGEST IN THE STATE -- ALREADY HAS A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO COPE WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THESE CHILDREN.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- NOLTE

"ALL CHILDREN AT THE END OF THIRD GRADE ARE TESTED, AND THOSE WHO TEST ABOVE A CERTAIN LEVEL ARE SELECTED OR IT'S MADE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO BE PART OF THIS PROGRAM. PARENTS ARE THEN NOTIFIED AND, WITH PARENT PERMISSION.

TAPE:
(CONT'D) THE KIDS GO TO WHAT THEY CALL CLUSTER SCHOOLS -- ALMOST A VERY SMALL WAY LIKE THE MAGNET SCHOOL CONCEPT. AND THEN THERE ARE CLASSES IN CERTAIN SCHOOLS AROUND THE CITY OF JUST GIFTED CHILDREN FROM FOURTH TO EIGHTH GRADE."

NARR: THE ONLY THING THAT IS, IN EFFECT, DIFFERENT ABOUT THOSE SPECIAL CLASSES IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHER TOWARD THE PUPIL: HAVING RECOGNIZED THAT HE IS DEALING WITH UNUSUAL CHILDREN, THE TEACHER GOES INTO CERTAIN SUBJECTS MUCH SOONER THAN HE WOULD GO WITH AVERAGE CHILDREN. BUT -- PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT -- THE GIFTED CHILD IS TREATED NOT AS A CHILD BUT MORE LIKE AN ADULT.

PERHAPS NEEDLESS TO ADD, THE IDEA OF TREATING THE GIFTED CHILD DIFFERENTLY HAS LED TO CRITICISM ON CHARGES OF ELITISM:

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- NOLTE

"IT'S A VERY COMMON CRITICISM, IF YOU WILL, PRIMARILY FROM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS WHO BELIEVE IN THE DEMOCRATIC CONCEPT. WELL, WE BELIEVE IN THE DEMOCRATIC CONCEPT, TOO, BUT OUR IDEA IS THAT ALL CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL, AND THAT INCLUDES NOT ONLY THE GIFTED CHILDREN BUT WHAT THEY CALL THE AVERAGE CHILD AND THE CHILDREN AT THE OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM."

NARR: THE QUESTION, THEN, REMAINS -- AS DO THE ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING PROBLEMS EDUCATORS HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH -- WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE GIFTED CHILD? THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED BELIEVES IT HAS FOUND THE ANSWER: FIRST

NARR:
(CONT'D)

OF ALL, CONSIDER THE GIFTED CHILD AS A NORMAL CHILD AND THEN GIVE HIM EVERY CHANCE TO PUT HIS GIFT OR TALENT TO BETTER USE.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE, THE WEEKLY VOICE OF AMERICA PROGRAM WHICH BRINGS YOU PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY'S DATELINE HAS BEEN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT _____ (AT THIS TIME) FOR ANOTHER DATELINE ... FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS IS_____.

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